

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 01977 091513Z

46

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9804

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 1977

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, US, WA, SF

SUBJ: US AND UN COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA

REF: USUN 1587

1. REFTEL PRESENTS THOUGHTFUL AND PERSUASIVE CASE FOR US TO DISCUSS WITH SCANS AND UK POSSIBILITY OF US JOINING AT SAME TIME COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA. I RECOGNIZE FULLY THE MERITS OF CASE PRESENTED BY USUN AND SOME OF MY OFFICERS AGREE WITH IT. I AM NOT RPT NOT PERSUADED, HOWEVER, AND BELIEVE WE SHOULD WEIGH PROPOSAL VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING.

2. AS REFTEL NOTED, SAG WOULD INDEED BE UNHAPPY IF US WERE TO JOIN COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA. SAG REGARDS COUNCIL WITH COMPLETE CONTEMPT AND OPEN HOSTILITY. IT WOULD VIEW US PRESENCE ON COUNCIL AS ADDING LEGITIMACY AND PRESTIGE TO AN ORGANIZATION WHICH NOTED LARGELY FOR HOPELESSLY EXTREMIST AND UNREALISTIC PROPOSALS. WE SHOULD THEREFORE BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT SAG WOULD TREAT THE MATTER LIGHTLY. ALTHOUGH WE MAY RECOGNIZE STATURE OF MCBRIDE AND DEGREE OF RESPECTABILITY HE BRINGS TO OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER, SAG DOES NOT. INDEED, SAG'S DISLIKE AND DISTRUST OF MCBRIDE IS UNDISGUISED. AS WE REPORTED LAST MONTH (PRETORIA 1629), PRIME MINISTER VORSTER RESPONDED IN STRONGEST TERMS TO
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 01977 091513Z

MCBRIDE'S ASSERTION THAT SAG WOULD BE OUT OF NAMIBIA WITHIN

2-5 YEARS. VORSTER CHARACTERIZED THIS AS "NONSENSE" AND SAID THAT MCBRIDE'S STATEMENT THAT VORSTER AND UN SYG WALDHEIN HAD FORESEEN SITUATION IN WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WOULD WITHDRAW FROM NAMIBIA WITHIN NEXT 10 YEARS WAS "ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE." MOREOVER, VORSTER SAID, SAG WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE MCBRIDE, HAD NEVER HAD ANY DEALINGS WITH HIM AND HAD NO INTENTION OF NEGOTIATING WITH HIM. SAG UNDOUBTEDLY WELCOMES DEPARTURE OF OGBU FROM POSITION OF CHAIRMAN, BUT WE ARE LESS CERTAIN THAT IT WOULD REGARD JACKSON OF GUYANA AS "PRAGMATIC" ON SUBJECT OF NAMIBIA.

3. AT PRESENT TIME, AND WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF FRENCH BECAUSE OF LATTER'S OPEN PROVISION OF ARMS TO SA, ETC., US AND UK PROBABLY HAVE MORE INFLUENCE WITH SAG ON SUBJECT OF NAMIBIA THAN ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTS. SAG OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT COMPLETELY AGREE WITH OUR VIEWS, BUT IT DOES CARE WHAT WE THINK AND LISTENS TO US. I THEREFORE WONDER WHETHER OUR JOINING OF COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA MIGHT NOT PREVENT US (ALONG WITH UK) FROM EXERCISING THE KIND OF INFLUENCE AND LEVERAGE ON SAG WHICH AT LATER TIME COULD BECOME VERY IMPORTANT INDEED. I AM ALSO LESS CERTAIN THAN MY USUN COLLEAGUES THAT OUR PRESENCE ON COUNCIL WOULD SUCCEED IN MODERATING ITS DELIBERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS, AND ALSO AM LESS SANGUINE THAT THIS WOULD MAKE AFRICANS MORE OPENLY SUPPORTIVE OF MANY US POSITIONS.

4. IF DECISION IS MADE TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH SCANS AND UK RE POSSIBILITY OF JOINING COUNCIL, I WOULD VERY MUCH HOPE THAT ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT ALSO BE DISCUSSED WITH BRITISH. VIEWED FROM HERE, PROBLEM OF NAMIBIA IS NOT ONE THAT WILL LEND ITSELF TO EARLY AND TIDY SOLUTION. IN MY JUDGMENT, IT IS AND WILL REMAIN FOR SOME TIME PROVERBIAL CAN OF WORMS, AND I WOULD NOT WANT USG TO BE PLACED IN POSITION OF ACCEPTING EVER-INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINDING SOLUTION. TOUGH AND PAINFUL NEGOTIATIONS, NATURE OF WHICH WE ARE UNABLE TO PREDICT, LIE AHEAD OF NAMIBIA. ON BALANCE, I CONCLUDE THAT WE MIGHT WELL BE IN BETTER POSITION TO INFLUENCE OUTCOME OF DEVELOPMENTS IN NAMIBIA BY REMAINING OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL THAN BY JOINING IT.

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